



CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Council discusses property tax levy and video gaming, approves purchase of public safety surveillance trailer

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the October 16, 2023, Decatur City Council meeting include discussion on the property tax levy and measures to curb video gaming, and the approval of purchasing a public safety surveillance trailer.

Property Tax Levy & Video Gaming discussions

On Monday night the Decatur City Council had lengthy discussions about changes that will slow the growth of video gaming in Decatur, as well as the property tax levy and additional revenue options. These items were discussion only and no action was taken during the meeting.

Council has been discussing proposed changes to the liquor code that would affect video gaming for many months. A moratorium on the issuance of any new video gaming licenses is in effect until the end of the year. In the meantime, City staff have prepared changes that reflect the Council's goal to slow down – or even stop – the growth of video gaming.

Proposed changes include tightening the definition of what a "restaurant" is so establishments cannot claim to be a restaurant just so they can have video gaming, the establishment of a "V" license that would be required in addition to a regular liquor license, an increased fee for Class P licenses (gaming parlors) to \$10,000, and several others. You can find all proposed changes in the Council packet, posted online: www.decaturl.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/. In general, Council said they were ready to move forward with most of the proposed video gaming changes.

Council also talked about the property tax levy. The City uses property tax revenue for five functions: fire pensions, police pensions, the public library, general obligation bonds, and the municipal band. City staff prepared options for the Council to consider for the levy: lower it, keep it relatively flat, or increase it. A majority of the members said they would consider options to keep property taxes lower.

Public Safety Surveillance Trailer

Council continued its support of public safety by approving the purchase of a crime prevention

surveillance trailer for the Decatur Police Department. The Mobile Scout Trailer extends cameras high in the air and helps police monitor public events or other large gatherings. The equipment's presence can serve as a visible deterrent in addition to assisting with safety/security operations and evidence collection. DPD has been testing the surveillance trailer for the past few weeks and has found that it works well.

The purchase will not exceed \$41,779 and will be paid for using funds from the Community Violence Prevention Grant that Senator Doris Turner secured for the City.

In other business

In other business...Council accepted a state grant and approved an agreement with the Central Illinois Landbank Authority (CILBA) to continue home rehabilitation projects. The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) awarded Decatur a \$337,000 Strong Communities grant last month. It will be administered by CILBA to continue saving and rehabilitating abandoned homes that would otherwise likely become demolition candidates.

An urban agriculture project in Old King's Orchard Neighborhood continues after Council agreed to a contract that will prepare vacant land for the project. Entler Excavation Co. was selected to help prepare the 300 block of W. Leafland Ave. They will remove existing drive approaches, pavement, and trees. The site will then be graded, and compost and clean soil will be mixed in.

Finally, Council approved Halloween Trick or Treat Hours, unchanged from previous years: Tuesday, October 31, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council Agenda packet, downloadable/viewable here: www.decaturlil.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/

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